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Statement submitted by World Society of Victimology, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 30 and 31 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* E/2014/1/Rev.1, annex II.

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Statement

This statement is intended as a pointer to some of the issues relevant to both victims and the theme of the Economic and Social Council high-level segment.

The problem of victimization throughout the world causes an ever-increasing concern, even in those nations where there has been a marked decrease in victimization. It is tragic that the very factors that have led, and continue to lead, to humankind's success are also those most likely to contribute to individual and collective victimization. On the one hand, for instance, foreign aid helps the disenfranchised, disadvantaged and vulnerable. Yet, on the other hand, it helps to keep authoritarian dictators and corrupt governments in power while victimizing those considered their enemies.

Governments, business and civil society that ignore such victimization and, among other things, fail to take heed of the rights abuses are explicitly and implicitly complicit. Thankfully, steps taken to achieve the Millennium Development Goals suggest that a lot of people get this and do not want to live in a world of extremes.

Violent crime is a prime example. Its impact daily on people's lives is profound and prolonged; its impact on economic development and social well-being is enormous. People are too often safer on the streets than in their homes. Women and children may be safer with a stranger than with a close family member, friend or acquaintance. Violent crime is not spread evenly throughout the world; in fact, there are marked differences among countries and within countries. Daily, people witness the vivid and frightening effects of violence, but too often such horror does not stir the condemnation warranted.

Furthermore, violence should be understood in terms of personal pathology and in social, economic and political terms. The causes of violence include frustration, anger, prejudice and grievances, mental illness, drug misuse and abuse, homelessness, disturbed home environments, and unstable social structures and economic structures, such as inequitable distribution of resources.

Much can be done to alleviate the destructiveness of violence and reduce human suffering. Consistent with the Millennium Development Goals, in order to reduce violence, for example, the world's resources need to be more equally shared so that the gap between the rich and the poor is narrowed. Food distribution, as a specific example, needs to be equalized so that the malnourished do not starve while the fewer grow obese.

It is imperative that those in power in nation-States respect the needs of all. The United Nations is tasked to be the most important forum for overseeing concrete steps taken to reduce violence and prevent victimization. The successes towards attaining the Millennium Development Goals suggest that the international community is heading in the right direction; however, since the economic crisis, for too many struggling victims, Governments, businesses and others seems to be stumbling, rather than engaged in concerted action. The World Society of Victimology calls on all to broaden their horizons beyond self-interest, beyond nation and beyond region to humankind as a whole.